

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 06946 111531Z

64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 MC-02 EB-11 COME-00 SIL-01

LAB-06 DRC-01 /142 W

----- 104375

R 111427Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1981

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CJCS

SEC USAF

DIA

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 6946

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MASS, BE

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT: LOCAL PRESS TREATMENT

REF: BRUSSELS 6417

1. SINCE REFTEL AUGUST 23 WHICH SUMMARIZED 3 LOCAL PRESS ITEMS, LOCAL PRESS INTEREST HAS DEVELOPED WIDELY. INDEPENDENT "LE SOIR" HAS CARRIED 5 ARTICLES; INFLUENTIAL CATHOLIC "LA LIBRE BELGIQUE", 4; SOCIALIST "LE PEUPLE", 3; FLEMISH LIBERAL "HET LAATSTE NIEUWS", 3; INFLUENTIAL CATHOLIC FLEMISH "DE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 06946 111531Z

STANDAARD", 2; WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINE "L'EXPRESS", "LA MEUSE",

"ECHO DE LA BOURSE", "LA DERNIERE HEURE", "HET VOLK",
COMMUNIST "LE DRAPEAU ROUGE" AND "LE JOURNAL DE CHARLEROI",
1 EACH. ADDITIONALLY, BELGIUM'S STATE-RUN RADIO, RTB, HAS
CARRIED NUMEROUS STORIES BASED ON BELGIAN AND FOREIGN PRESS.

2. BESIDES USUAL TOPICS ON STATUS OF DECISION, COMMENTS ON
COMPETING AIRCRAFT, NEED FOR GOOD ECONOMIC OFFSET OFFERS,
TRAVEL AND STATEMENTS BY INDIVIDUALS, FOLLOWING THEMES HAVE BEEN
REPORTED:

A) A COMMENT ALLEGEDLY BY PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS
IN JULY TO GISCARD D'ESTAING THAT THE DECISION ON WHICH
AIRCRAFT TO ACQUIRE WOULD BE FACILITATED WERE FRANCE TO
JOIN THE EUROGROUP, WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO FACILITATE COOPERATION
IN THE ACQUISITION OF DEFENSE MATERIAL AMONG ITS MEMBERS
("LE SOIR", SEPT. 10).

B) QUESTIONS ON WHETHER THE FRENCH AF WILL REALLY
ACQUIRE THE NEW MIRAGE F-1 M53 AND IF SO HOW MANY ("LE SOIR",
SEPT. 10).

C) A SUGGESTION THAT THERE IS A MONETARY ASPECT TO THE
ISSUE BESIDE THE FINANCIAL ONE, DUE TO THE EFFECT OF THE
SALE OR NON-SALE OF THE MIRAGE ON THE STABILITY OF THE
FRENCH FRANC ("LE SOIR").

D) THE ADVERSE INFLATIONARY EFFECT OF A BELGIAN 30
BILLION BF AIRCRAFT PURCHASE AT THIS TIME ("HET VOLK").

E) INTEREST ON THE PART OF LABOR UNIONS IN MAKING
INPUT ON BELGIAN DECISION ("LE PEUPLE", SEPT. 4). "LE
JOURNAL DE CHARLEROI", ANOTHER SOCIALIST PAPER, DID NOT,
HOWEVER, SUPPORT THE IDEA THAT UNIONS SHOULD BE CONSULTED
ON DECISION-MAKING.

F) A SUGGESTION THAT THE DECISION BE POSTPONED UNTIL THE
RESULTS OF THE AMERICAN TESTS ARE IN DESPITE THE PROBLEMS THIS
DELAY MIGHT CAUSE THE BELGIAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY ("L'ECHO DE
LA BOURSE", SEPT. 4).

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 06946 111531Z

G) THE NEED TO ENSURE THE NATIONAL DEFENSE, TO MEET
NATO-LEVIED COMBAT ROLES AND TO GIVE BELGIAN AF PILOTS MODERN
AND SAFE EQUIPMENT ("LA LIBRE BELGIQUE", SEPT. 7-8).

H) POSSIBLE BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN FRENCH PROJECT TO
BUILD NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS IN IRAN AS PART OF PACKAGE DEAL
IF BELGIUM OPTS FOR MIRAGE ("HET LAATSTE NIEUWS", AUG. 27).

I) A POSSIBLE NEW AND EXCLUSIVE ROUTE FROM BRUSSELS TO PARIS (ROISSY, WHICH WILL REPLACE ORLY) FOR THE BELGIAN AIRLINE, SABENA, IN RETURN FOR WHICH AIR FRANCE WOULD GET AN EXCLUSIVE ROUTE FROM BRUSSELS TO NICE AS PART OF A PACKAGE DEAL. ("LE SOIR", SEPT. 6 AND 10.)

J) SOME SARCASM DIRECTED AT A PREVIOUS BELGIAN MOD'S PURCHASE OF FRENCH PRACTICE SECAN-TYPE BOMBS WHICH CANNOT BE DROPPED FROM THE BAF'S MIRAGES WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT UP IN THE AIRCRAFT'S AIR TURBULENCE AND HITTING THE PLANE. "BOUGHT FOR GOOD MONEY WHEN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WAS FULL OF ADMIRATION FOR EVERYTHING THAT CAME FROM FRANCE" ("HET LAATSTE NIEUWS", SEPT. 4).

K) A GENERAL CONSENSUS ON THE PART OF MOST BELGIAN PAPERS THAT THE SWEDES AND BRITISH ARE OUT OF THE RUNNING WITH THEIR COMPETITOR AIRCRAFT.

3. COMMENT: THE F-104 REPLACEMENT ISSUE IS NOW FIRMLY IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND HAS CAUGHT THE PUBLIC INTEREST. IT IS NOT A PARTISAN QUESTION AND THE SELECTION, WHEN MADE, WILL BE CLOSELY SCRUTINIZED ON MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND EUROPEAN POLITICAL TERMS. THE MIRAGE AND THE REPORTED FRENCH OFFER CONTINUE TO GET A DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF PRESS PLAY HERE, PROBABLY MORE DUE TO THE RECENT FRENCH SPONSORED TRIP TO FRANCE FOR MEMBERS OF THE BELGIAN PRESS THAN TO LOCAL PRO-FRENCH NEWS SOURCES. THE UNDERSTATED THEME BEHIND CONSIDERABLE LOCAL COMMENTARY IS THAT THE BENEFITS TO THE FRENCH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY, SHOULD BELGIUM OPT FOR THE MIRAGE, ARE IN THE LONG RUN THE MEANS OF MAINTAINING A VIABLE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY IN EUROPE. THIS ARGUMENT CARRIES WEIGHT HERE. FIRESTONE

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALES, MILITARY AIRCRAFT, PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BRUSSE06946
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740253-0891
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740957/aaaabwce.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BRUSSELS 6417
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2002 by maustmc>; APPROVED <18 JUL 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-104 REPLACEMENT: LOCAL PRESS TREATMENT
TAGS: MASS, BE
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005